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A/AC.198/1994/2
29 March 1994

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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
Sixteenth session
9-24 May 1994

SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 46/73 B of 11 December 1991, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit the reports of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) to the Committee on Information at its consecutive sessions. The present report, covering the activities of JUNIC during 1993, has been prepared in response to that request.

2. JUNIC held its nineteenth session at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization in London, from 20 to 22 July 1993, under the chairmanship of Mr. Richard Lydiker, Director of Information of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Information directors and officials of 28 United Nations bodies, including specialized agencies and related organizations, attended the session. The report on the session was presented to the Administrative Committee on Coordination. JUNIC considered a variety of matters relating to inter-agency cooperation in the field of public information. Below is a summary of the discussion, and an account of some of the follow-up action on decisions taken at the session on issues that could be of interest to the members of the Committee on Information:

(a) JUNIC discussed several issues pertaining to the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, which has become even more valuable at a time when the United Nations as a whole has been sparing no effort to expand its outreach to non-governmental organizations. At its 1992 session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination endorsed the recommendation of JUNIC that the Service should become a jointly financed activity of the United Nations system, based on voluntary and sustainable financial contributions. As far as the United Nations is concerned, the General Assembly, in section II of its resolution 48/228, allocated $500,000 as provisional financing, from the United Nations regular budget, of the activities of the Service, on the understanding that such financing should not be used for salaries, travel and representation activities

of the staffs of non-governmental organizations. The allocation will be subject to reporting to the Secretary-General on its use and audit by appropriate bodies.

(b) JUNIC held extensive discussions on a system-wide publication on development issues that could replace Development Forum, which ceased publication at the end of 1992 owing to a lack of sufficient funding from the regular budget and/or extrabudgetary sources. JUNIC looked into various options as a means of filling the present vacuum in this regard. Several members of JUNIC reiterated the interest of their organizations in having a new system-wide publication on development issues in the future, when the necessary funds become available. In view of the present financial situation, JUNIC decided to continue discussions on this matter pending specific indications that the necessary funding had been generated.

(c) With regard to participation of the United Nations system in international exhibitions, JUNIC agreed on the need to establish substantive guidelines for such participation, in addition to the already existing guidelines that regulate the relationship between the United Nations system and the sponsors of such events. This matter is to be discussed further at the upcoming twentieth session of JUNIC.

(d) JUNIC also discussed proposals for inter-agency information activities in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as information activities relating to upcoming major events, including the International Year of the Family (1994) and a series of international conferences scheduled for 1994 and 1995, leading to the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

(e) With regard to the International Conference on Population and Development, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) outlined the elements of its information programme for the Conference. While no inter-agency activities were proposed, all members of JUNIC with an interest in population issues were invited to make their own contributions to public information and awareness creation for the Conference.

(f) JUNIC also held extensive discussions on a comprehensive information strategy to publicize the issues before the upcoming World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in March and September 1995, respectively. After its nineteenth session, JUNIC met in two ad hoc sessions, in September 1993 and February 1994, to develop and finalize the information strategies for those two important events. Special efforts were made to link the issues before the two conferences and develop programmes and products that could be used to promote awareness and generate support for the concerns to be addressed in both events. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat was entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating both information programmes.

(g) JUNIC discussed a number of issues relating to the use of computer technology in the field of information. JUNIC agreed that it would be useful if every information unit in the United Nations system established a means of accessing InterNet, which appeared to be gaining world-wide acceptance. In

addition, it was suggested that it would be extremely desirable if, subject to their internal rules and regulations, all organizations of the United Nations system would use the same software to communicate among themselves. It was proposed that such a system could be tested in connection with Agora, the user-friendly, low-cost, multilingual electronic information and communication system adopted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The representative of IFAD briefed the members of JUNIC on the advantages of that system and invited them to join its group and test the system with a view to establishing a similar system at the level of JUNIC. Also on the issue of the use of computer technology in the field of information, JUNIC agreed that, to the extent possible, photographic databases established in member organizations should be designed to be open and platform independent (i.e., accessible from, and capable of running on, a variety of different computers).

(h) In September 1993, JUNIC held a workshop for Directors of Information of bilateral and multilateral development agencies under the sponsorship of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA. The participants in the workshop discussed a number of issues of mutual concern, including the ways and means of reversing the decreasing interest of the international community in development assistance in the aftermath of the cold war. They also reviewed public attitudes in developed countries towards development assistance, looked into several international audio-visual initiatives and discussed information strategies for several upcoming major United Nations conferences. The group agreed on several proposals for joint action, including the creation of a development information network that would be accessible electronically and include a data bank, and the convening of a colloquium on strategies for communicating global development issues, to be held in 1994. The group also agreed that the Directors of Information of bilateral and multilateral development agencies should meet annually, immediately following or preceding the annual session of JUNIC.

(i) Upon the recommendation made by JUNIC at its nineteenth session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination endorsed the appointment of Ms. Mehr Khan, Director of Information of UNICEF, as Chairperson of JUNIC for 1994-1995.

3. The twentieth session of JUNIC is scheduled to take place from 5 to 7 July 1994 at the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization at Montreal. JUNIC is expected to follow up on a number of activities initiated over the last year and assess progress in the implementation of system-wide information programmes for upcoming major events, including the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

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SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Status of Development Forum

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993, the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to suggest ways and means to revive Development Forum, which had continued to receive a mandate of the Assembly, and to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth substantive session.

2. Development Forum was launched in 1972 and initially funded by grants from a trust fund created by donations from Member States. In 1978, a companion publication sold by subscription and entitled Development Business was introduced to serve a number of objectives, key among which were: dissemination of multilateral bank procurement information to subscribing companies; informing the international business community about United Nations efforts in the fields of economic and social development; and, with surplus subscription revenue, subsidizing the cost of Development Forum. By the late 1970s, government contributions to the trust fund had fallen off significantly, and income from Development Business proved insufficient to support the combined operation. As a result, in 1979, within the context of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), a number of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies stepped in to fund the publication, which became a JUNIC project. The United Nations University (UNU) agreed to become the co-publisher and to assume a major share of publication costs. In 1980, UNU contributed $200,000, representing some 24 per cent of the publication's expenditures for the year. The General Assembly approved an annual subvention of $200,000 for the publication for 1980.

3. In the 1980s, lacking a basis for sustained financing, Development Forum remained on a precarious footing, as contributions from United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and Governments declined steadily. Major contributors reduced their support, while others ceased to contribute entirely. In May 1988,

for example, the contribution of UNU dropped to $10,000, compared to payments ranging from $100,000 to $200,000 from 1980 to 1987. The contribution of the United Nations Development Programme fell from a high of $100,000 in 1987 to zero in 1988. The United Nations Population Fund, a strong supporter, with $80,000 a year in contributions from 1980 to 1985, thereafter reduced its support substantially. In 1992, contributions from United Nations bodies and specialized agencies covered an all-time low of 19 per cent of Development Forum expenditures, compared to a high of 56 per cent.

4. Overall, for the period from 1980 to 1992, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and Governments accounted for 41 per cent of contributions to Development Forum; the General Assembly subvention accounted for 32 per cent; Development Business, 22 per cent; government contributions, 4 per cent; and subscriptions to Development Forum, 1 per cent. From 1982 until 1992, Development Forum relied on revenues from Development Business to help compensate for ongoing budget deficits.

5. In the face of rising costs, due strictly to inflation, and declining income in the 1980s, Development Forum made dramatic programme cuts. These included reducing the number of yearly editions from 10 to 9 in 1986 and to 6 in 1988, moving the operation from Geneva to New York in 1984 and cutting the number of free subscriptions in all three language editions by 50 per cent. Income-generating attempts included asking readers to pay for their subscriptions, requesting increased financial support from the members of JUNIC and cutting back on the expenditures of Development Business. The latter action increased the amount of money from Development Business available to Development Forum but required cuts in the staff expenditure of the business edition, as well as in marketing and equipment expenditure, having an adverse effect on the publication in terms of its ability to generate revenue and acquire additional subscriptions.

6. In 1992, Development Forum faced a severe financial crisis, with a deficit of $360,700 projected for the end of the year, despite the $200,000 subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations. It became apparent by the middle of the year that it would not be possible to develop a plan for the sustained financing of Development Forum without increasing the subvention. Therefore, the Secretary-General decided, as an exceptional measure, to authorize an advance of $200,000 from the 1993 portion of the regular budget for the biennium 1992-1993 in order to continue the publication until the end of the year so that a performance report could be prepared for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

7. In the performance report, the Secretary-General commented that, since its inception, expressions of support for Development Forum had never been fully translated into assured financing on a continuing basis at a realistic level for the publication. During the intervening years the Secretariat had been able to meet the General Assembly's and United Nations system agency behests to maintain production of Development Forum (general edition) only by dint of extraordinary effort and through a variety of ad hoc measures. However, over time, the price paid was in terms of decreased periodicity and compromised quality of production (content, format, presentation and paper used), which ultimately had a

cumulative deleterious effect on the credibility and viability of the publication itself. 1/

8. The Secretary-General concluded in the same report that the dictates of financial and budgetary reality and responsibility would leave open no option but to cease production of the general edition of Development Forum as from 31 December 1992. The Secretary-General recommended the continuing publication of Development Business, which over the years had generated income in excess of expenses incurred.

9. In December 1992, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions considered the report of the Secretary-General and agreed that Development Forum should cease publication by 31 December 1992 and that the production of Development Business should continue at least until such time as its reserve account had been replenished from the excess income of the operation to the point where the reserve fully covered all contingent liability obligations. 2/

10. At its nineteenth session, in July 1993, JUNIC also considered questions related to a system-wide publication on development issues. Several members of JUNIC expressed the interest of their organizations in a new system-wide publication on development issues in the future, when concrete sources of funding could be identified. The members of JUNIC also looked into several options as a means of filling the present vacuum in the dissemination of information on economic and social development at the level of the United Nations system. In view of the lack of funding, JUNIC decided to continue its consideration of this matter.

11. To revive Development Forum in a professionally appropriate format would require guaranteed sustained funding to cover the production, including staff costs, which is not likely to become available under the current circumstances. Should the General Assembly decide to review the situation with regard to the revival of Development Forum, special consideration must be given to the financial implications.

Notes

1/ A/CN.1/R.1162 of 4 November 1992.

2/ AC/1140 of 9 December 1992.

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SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Review of publications by the Department of Public Information

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993, the General Assembly requested "the management of the Department of Public Information to review the Department's publications and proposals for publications to ensure that all publications fulfil an identifiable need, that they do not duplicate other publications inside or outside the United Nations system, and that they are produced in a cost-effective manner, and report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth substantive session".

2. The present report is submitted to the Committee on Information in response to that request. It is intended also to complement the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General on continuous and major publications of the Department for Public Information. 1/ In this regard, the present report gives particular consideration to the non-recurrent publications produced by the Department of Public Information. A list of the publications issued in 1993 is contained in the annex to the present document.

3. The publications released by the Department, both recurrent and non-recurrent, deal with specific and topical issues of major concern to the international community. They are produced and distributed in response to the mandates established by the General Assembly, as well as to new priorities set by Member States and the Secretary-General. The purpose of these publications is:

(a) The promotion of major issues before the Organization;

(b) The creation of awareness of, and support for, important United Nations conferences and events;

(c) The fostering of an informed understanding of United Nations peace-keeping and other political missions.

4. The criteria applied by the management of the Department of Public Information for the production of recurrent and non-recurrent publications are designed to ensure that they, inter alia:

(a) Promote the principles and purposes of the United Nations;

(b) Generate public support for the achievement of the respective programme objectives;

(c) Respond in a timely manner to an identified demand from target audiences.

5. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that "the Department of Public Information is responsible for the creation and preparation of materials designed to provide the media and the general public with current information about the United Nations and its objectives and activities". 2/ According to reports from the respective project managers, as well as from the United Nations information centres and other field offices, the publications issued by the Department have in many instances contributed significantly to generating media coverage of United Nations activities and events and are considered by media organizations and others to be authoritative sources of factual information. Careful consideration is given so that the publications produced by the Department do not substantially duplicate material that has already been published. At times, however, in order to appeal to different audiences, the Department might undertake to present some publications in a more appropriate format for such a purpose. This, for example, is the case with a number of major documents, such as the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which, immediately following its release as an official document, is traditionally produced in book format by the Department in the official languages and, through the network of United Nations information centres, in other languages as well.

6. The review of these publications and their mandates is normally undertaken in the context of the preparation of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget. In addition, the Department carries out on a continual basis a review of all proposals for publications. In that process, careful attention is paid to the extent to which the information to be provided by such publications might already be available in publications produced elsewhere, both inside and outside the United Nations system.

7. In view of the evolving mandate of the United Nations in the field of peace-keeping and peacemaking, the availability of print material for public information is a crucial aspect of the promotion of world-wide understanding and support. As the Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization: 3/

> "In the atmosphere of heightened tension in conflict areas, public information activities play a vital role in facilitating the mission's work by disseminating timely and objective information, and counteracting

propaganda and misinformation. Effective public information activities can also be instrumental in generating and sustaining the support of the international community for the success of the missions. In the absence of information from the United Nations there may be misunderstandings of the United Nations mandate, which can give rise to unwarranted criticism of the Organization's activities."

8. With this in mind, and in response to the unprecedented upsurge in media and public interest in this area of the work of the Organization, during 1993 the Department issued 21 publications devoted exclusively to peace-keeping and other political missions. All of these publications are unique in that no other office of the United Nations system produces information material of this nature. In the preparation, design, production and distribution of these publications, the Department cooperated closely with the Department for Peace-keeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and other substantive offices concerned. In order to maximize their timeliness and usefulness, almost all of these publications are first issued in a desk-top publishing format, followed by internal printing. In this manner, the cost of production is kept to a minimum. The desktop publishing format is sent by electronic or other means to nearly 1,000 recipients, including media, non-governmental organizations and various field offices, in English, French and Spanish, as warranted.

9. The Department continues to issue publications related to the preparation and follow up to major United Nations conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994), the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). It should be noted that all publications, including press kits, newsletters, backgrounders, fact sheets, posters, feature articles and booklets, are planned, produced and distributed in cooperation with the relevant substantive departments and other agencies or programmes of the United Nations system. In many instances, the information programmes developed for these events are considered by the Joint United Nations Information Committee with a view to developing joint information activities related to the events in question.

10. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 47/128 of 18 December 1992, entitled "Development of public information activities in the field of human rights", the General Assembly reaffirmed the need for information materials on human rights to be tailored to regional and national requirements and circumstances with specific target audiences in mind. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Assembly reiterated that the Department of Public Information had primary responsibility for public information activities of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights. With this in mind, during 1993, the Department produced and distributed a considerable number of publications on human rights in general, as well as on other related issues, including indigenous people, in particular in the context of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People (1993), as well as publications on women and on issues pertaining to the

International Year of the Family (1994). In response to the demands by various audiences, several earlier releases were reprinted.

11. The results of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights were published in book format. Although the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action 4/ were available as official documents, the Department took this decision in order to facilitate access to the documents by media organizations, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. The objective of better reaching target audiences also prompted the Department to issue as publications basic human rights texts in the official languages and, through the network of United Nations information centres, in other languages. These publications included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Bill of Human Rights and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

12. In paragraph 2 (a) of resolution 47/73 B of 14 December 1992, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue dissemination of information in support of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and for the tremendous efforts of the African countries aimed at recovery and development, as well as the positive response by the international community to alleviate the serious economic situation prevailing in Africa. In addition to the Department's quarterly publication Africa Recovery, the principal means of fulfilling this mandate through print materials has been the continued release of specialized press kits, briefing papers, feature articles and pamphlets. In 1993, these materials focused on a variety of priority issues, such as debt, food security and major involvements of the Organization in the region. The determination of subjects to be covered by these products was the result of proposals and consultations with the Inter-agency Task Force on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development in Africa in the 1990s. None of the publications by the Department duplicated other material produced within the United Nations system.

13. Great attention has been given to the cost-effective production of these publications within the constraints of quality, accuracy and timeliness to the targeted audiences, including media organizations, government officials, non-governmental organizations, research institutes and the business community. Printing is carried out externally for reasons of quality and timeliness, but the recent adoption of a desk-top publishing system has enabled the Department better to meet the needs, while ensuring efficient cost management.

14. Publications relating to the question of Palestine, to activities against apartheid and to decolonization continue to be mandated by respective resolutions of the General Assembly, the latest of which were resolutions 48/44 B and 48/53 of 10 December 1993 and 48/158 of 20 December 1993. The publications released in accordance with these mandates include books, feature articles, backgrounders and posters. They do not duplicate other publications produced within the United Nations system or outside of it, as they originate from unique activities of the Department, such as encounters, seminars or fact-finding missions, or are prompted by other specific United Nations activities.

15. The publications of the Department of Public Information are printed either internally or externally, depending on various considerations, such as

timeliness, quality and complexity of design, availability of internal printing capacities, and so on. The Department works in close cooperation with the substantive offices concerned, including secretariats of respective intergovernmental bodies, in the development of information materials on the question of Palestine, against apartheid and on decolonization aimed at government officials, media organizations, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions.

16. In order to reach the targeted audiences, the Department has developed mailing lists maintained at Headquarters and by the United Nations information centres and services. These lists are regularly updated. Owing to budgetary constraints, the Department has been experiencing difficulties in its efforts to increase substantially the print runs of the publications, but at the same time it has taken steps to make its products available through other means, including primarily the international information exchange networks. A considerable number of the publications referred to in the present report are already distributed through such networks, including APC, TogetherNet, Agora and GemNet, and are available to InterNet users.

17. The Department intends to continue to review on an ongoing basis the need for its publications among specific audiences and to make every effort to insure their cost-effective production and distribution.

Notes

1/ A/AC.198/1993/5.

2/ Report of the Secretary-General on publications policy of the United Nations (A/AC.198/1993/4).

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/48/1), para. 297.

4/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

Annex

Department of Public Information

Published material (non-recurrent) during 1993

	DPI No.	TITLE	TYPE	LANGUAGE	MONTH OF RELEASE
1	926/Rev.1	Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women	Booklet	English-10,000 French-5,000 Russian-5,000 Spanish-5,000	October October October October
2	995/Rev.1	Ending Discrimination against Women	Brochure	English-10,000 French-7,000 Spanish-5,000 Arabic-5,000	October October October October
3	1015/Rev.1	The United Nations and Drug Abuse Control	Booklet	English-10,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
4	1192	Life of the Palestinians under Israeli Occupation	Book	Arabic-2,000 German-1,000	June-UNIC Cairo February-UNIS Vienna
5	1239/Rev.2	UN Focus: United Nations Special Commission	Booklet	English-2,500 (+ 1,500 desktop)	May
6	1247	Agenda for Peace: Report of the Secrecary-General on Peace-keeping and Peacemaking	Booklet	Amharic Swahili Turkish Nepali Urdu	
7	1248	Promoting the Rights of Indigenous People	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-4,000 Spanish-6,000	May May May
8	1249/Rev.1	International Year for the World's Indigenous People	Brochure	English-30,000 French-10,000 Spanish-15,000 Japanese-2,000	May May May May
9	1264	United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons In Brief	Booklet	French-3,000	March
10	1277	International Year for the World's Indigenous People	Logo sheets	English-10,000 French-10,000 Spanish-10,000	April April April
11	1279/Rev.1	World Conference on Human Rights	Press kit	English-7,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000 Dutch Swedish German Portuguese Romanian Ewe and Kabye	April April April UNIS Vienna UNIC Lisbon UNIC Bucharest UNIC Lomé
12	1281	UN Focus: Recent Developments on the Issue of Apartheid in South Africa	Backgrounder	Spanish German Greek	February-UNIC Madrid March-UNIS Vienna March-UNIC Athens
13	1283	Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-4,000 Spanish-6,000	May May May

	DPI No.	TITLE	TYPE	LANGUAGE	MONTH OF RELEASE
14	1284	The Girl Child	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
15	1290	United Nations Mechanisms to Protect Human Rights	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
16	1291	Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
17	1292	Eliminating Torture	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
18	1293	Indigenous People and Self-Rule	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-4,000 Spanish-6,000	June June June
19	1294	Indigenous People, Environment and Development	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-4,000 Spanish-6,000	June June June
20	1295	Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous People	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-4,000 Spanish-6,000	June June June
21	1296	Facts about Indigenous Peoples	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-4,000 Spanish-6,000	June June June
22	1298	Press Summary of Agenda 21	Booklet	English-2,000 French-2,000 Spanish-2,000	June June June
23	1302 1302/Rev.1	Notes for Speakers on Issue of Human Rights	Book	English-10,000 French-5,000 Spanish-5,000 Japanese	September October November
24	1306/Rev.1	United Nations Peace-keeping Operations	Booklet	English-3,000 (+ 3,000 desktop)	March
25	1306/Rev.2	United Nations Peace-keeping Operations	Booklet	English-4,500	December
26	1311	UN Focus: At the UN - Women NGOs	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
27	1312/Rev.1	The United Nations and the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia	Booklet	English-5,000 (+ 2,000 desktop)	June
28	1315	50th Anniversary of the United Nations	Poster	English-15,000 French-7,000 Spanish-7,000	June June June
29	1319	Building for Peace in the Middle East	Book	English-10,800 French-2,500	March March
30	1321	The United Nations and the Situation in Somalia	Booklet	Greek	February-UNIC Athens

	DPI No.	TITLE	TYPE	LANGUAGE	MONTH OF RELEASE
31	1321/Rev.1	The United Nations and the Situation in Somalia	Booklet	English-4,000 (+ 2,000 desktop)	June
32	1326	UN Focus: United Nations Operation in Mozambique	Backgrounder	English-5,000 (+ 5,000 desktop) French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	February February February
33	1328	United Nations Social Agenda No. 7	Brochure	English-10,000 French-5,000 Spanish-5,000	April April April
34	1331	UN Focus: Women and Literacy	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	September September September
35	1332	UN Focus: Women of violence	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	December December December
36	1333	UN Focus: Recent Developments on the Issue of Apartheid in South Africa II	Backgrounder	English-3,000 French-2,000	April April
37	1334	United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER)	Brochure	English-3,000 Arabic-2,000 Tigrigna-3,000	March March March
38	1337	United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER)	Poster	English-1,000 Arabic-1,500 Tigrigna-3,000	February February February
39	1338	United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER)	Sticker	English-500 Arabic-1,000 Tigrigna-2,500	March March March
40	1339	United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER)	T-shirt	English-500	February
41	1340	International Year for the World's Indigenous People	Press kit	English-5,000 French-2,000 Spanish-3,000 Japanese-2,000	May May May May
42	1341	United Nations Achievements in the Field of Decolonization and the Task Ahead	Booklet	English-3,000 French-2,000 Spanish-2,000	April April April
43	1342	UN Focus: Women and Public Life	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	December December December
44	1343	UN Focus: Women and Poverty	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	December December December
45	1352	UN Focus: Cambodia (UNTAC)	Backgrounder	English-5,000 (+ 2,000 desktop) French-2,500	March March

	DPI No.	TITLE	TYPE	LANGUAGE	MONTH OF RELEASE
46	1355	World Conference on Human Rights (films, videos, reproductions)	Advertisement	English-5,000 French-2,000 Spanish-2,000 German-2,000	April April April April
47	1356	Families Who Flee	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November
48	1357	Changing Families	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November
49	1358	Freedom from Hunger - FAO	Backgrounder	English-7,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
50	1359	UN Focus: New concepts for development in Africa	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000	March March
51	1362	Development, Democracy and Human Rights	Backgrounder	English-7,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	April April April
52	1377	Population Trends and Family	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November
53	1387/Rev.1	Women's Fact Sheet	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	August August August
54	1388	World Economic Survey (summary)	Backgrounder	English-5,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	June June June
55	1389	UN Focus: Cambodia Election Results	Backgrounder	English-5,000 (+ 2,000 desktop)	July
56	1391	UN Focus: United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa	Backgrounder	English-5,000	August
57	1399	United Nations Peace-keeping	Booklet	English-35,000 French-15,000 Spanish-15,000	August October October
58	1400	UN Focus: Uganda/Rwanda	Backgrounder	English-3,500 (+ 2,000 desktop) French-2,000	September September
59	1401	UN Focus: Georgia	Backgrounder	English-3,500 (+ 2,000 desktop) French-2,000	September November
60	1402	UN Focus: Haiti	Backgrounder	English-3,000 (+ 2,000 desktop) French-2,500 Spanish-2,000	September September September
61	1407	Human Rights and the Family	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November

	DPI No.	TITLE	TYPE	LANGUAGE	MONTH OF RELEASE
62	1409	United Nations Peace-keeping: Answers at your Finger-tips	Backgrounder	English-10,000 French-5,000 Spanish-5,000	December December December
63	1411	Indigenous People (exhibit brochure)	Booklet	English-10,000	October
64	1413	End of Colonialization by the Year 2000	Poster	English-10,000 French-5,000 Spanish-5,000	December December December
65	1417	Families at Risk	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November
66	1418	Family's Role in Socializing Youth	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November
67	1419	International Year of the Family and the United Nations System	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	November November November
68	1424	Fourth World Conference on Women	Backgrounder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	December December December
69	1426	Chemical Weapons Convention: Questions and Answers	Brochure	English-12,000	October
70	1430	Jerusalem - Visions of reconciliation	Book	English-5,500	December
71	1432	Press Kit for International Year of the Family	Folder	English-8,000 French-3,000 Spanish-3,000	December December December
72	1449	Special General Assembly Meeting on Drug Abuse Control	Backgrounder	English-400 French-200 Spanish-200	October October October
73	PS/DPI/15/ Rev.3	United Nations Peace-keeping: Facts and Figures	Booklet	English-3,000 (desktop)	January
74	PS/DPI/15/ Rev.4	United Nations Peace-keeping: Facts and Figures	Booklet	English-3,000 (desktop)	May
75	PS/DPI/15/ Rev.5	United Nations Peace-keeping: Facts and Figures	Booklet	English-3,000 (desktop)	October
76		The United Nations Role in Drug Abuse Control	Public service announcement	English	December
77		Africa Recovery, Briefing Paper No. 7, "Somalia - Restore Hope"	Pamphlet	English-12,000 French-4,000	January January
78		Africa Recovery, Briefing Paper No. 8, "Mozambique - Out of the reach of war"	Pamphlet	English-12,000 French-4,000	May May
79		Africa Recovery, Briefing Paper No. 9, "Famine defeated: Southern Africa. UN wins battle against drought"	Pamphlet	English-10,000 French-2,700	August August

	DPI No.	TITLE	TYPE	LANGUAGE	MONTH OF RELEASE
80		Africa Recovery, Briefing Note, UN battle to bring relief to war-torn Angola	Backgrounder	English-1,000	December
81		Africa Recovery, Briefing Note, Mobilizing support for Africa (update on the New Agenda for Africa)	Backgrounder	English-11,000 French-3,000	December December
82		African Debt Crisis: A continuing impediment to development	Backgrounder	English-1,000	December
83		Teaching guide about Peace-keeping and Peace-making	Booklet	English-10,000 French-5,000 Spanish-5,000	December December December

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UNITED
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General Assembly

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A/AC.198/1994/5
29 March 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
Sixteenth session
9-24 May 1994

SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Integration of United Nations information centres with field offices of the United Nations Development Programme

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session for the purpose of evaluating the need for any subsequent integration, the results of the current trial of integrating 18 United Nations information centres with field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/1993/7). The Secretary-General should also report on the views of the host countries, bearing in mind the concerns of Member States that the integration of the United Nations information centres with the United Nations offices could adversely affect their functions in the developing countries. The present report was prepared on the basis of a survey of the integrated United Nations information centres conducted by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. As requested by the General Assembly, the report also contains the views of those host countries of the integrated centres that responded to the Secretariat by the time of the completion of this report.

2. In his report on the integration of United Nations information centres with other United Nations offices, while maintaining the functional autonomy of the United Nations information centres, submitted to the Committee on Information at its fifteenth session, the Secretary-General stipulated that the experience with integration would be evaluated after a trial period of one year, during which time the terms of integration would be refined through exchanges between the field offices and Headquarters (A/AC.198/1993/7, para. 17).

3. In the preparation of the present report, careful consideration has been given to the objectives behind the decision of the Secretary-General, in March 1992, that in the interest of improved productivity and economies of scale, as well as presenting a unified United Nations image, ... wherever feasible, the operations of United Nations information centres should be integrated with those of UNDP field offices (A/AC.198/1993/7, para. 3). With this in mind, particular attention has been given to the achievement of the purposes and objectives outlined by the Secretary-General with regard to the integration process, namely:

(a) To present a unified image of the United Nations in the field;

(b) To enhance information activities in all areas, including development issues;

(c) To achieve economies through sharing of common services.

In addition, the integration of the operations of the field offices was designed to facilitate inter-agency coordination and avoid duplication.

II. OVERVIEW

4. The integration exercise was originally intended to involve 18 information centres in locations where the Resident Representatives of UNDP already serve concurrently as full-time directors of the United Nations information centres. Those centres are located at Algiers, Ankara, Antananarivo, Asunción, Bucharest, Cairo, Colombo, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, La Paz, Lomé, Managua, Maseru, Monrovia, Panama City, San Salvador and Yangon. However, owing to the prevailing conditions in two host countries, two United Nations information centres were excluded from this exercise: the centre at Monrovia is currently not operational, while the public information activities of the centre at San Salvador have been temporarily shifted to the information service of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador. On 3 August 1992, joint letters by the Director of the Information Centres Division of the Department of Public Information and the Director of the Division of Public Affairs of UNDP were sent to the 16 officials in the field outlining policies and guidelines for the integrated operation. On 16 July 1993, the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information asked the Permanent Representatives of the host Governments concerned to submit the views of their Government on the integration exercise. On 28 January 1994, the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information sent a second letter to the Permanent Representatives concerned.

5. On 1 November 1993, the Department sent a questionnaire to the directors of 16 integrated United Nations information centres, accompanied by a letter from the senior officers of both the Department of Public Information and UNDP, explaining the mandate for the survey and the need for an evaluation. In accordance with the purposes and objectives of the integration exercise, the self-administered questionnaire was designed mainly to obtain information on the results of the integration, its effects on possible administrative changes and the streamlining of operations, practical aspects of the planning and implementation of information activities and strategies, the status of any

sharing of common services and subsequent cost savings, as well as the enhancement of inter-agency cooperation in the public information activities in the host country.

6. Ten of the United Nations information centres surveyed share premises with UNDP, while six maintain separate premises.

III. SURVEY RESULTS

7. In their responses, 12 Directors indicated that, as a result of integration, inter-agency cooperation for public information activities had been enhanced, the unified presence of the United Nations in the host country had been strengthened, and information activities in all areas, including those relating to development issues, were carried out in a more effective manner.

8. Nine Directors responded that the integration of the two offices had resulted in additional responsibilities for the incumbents, while ensuring a more consolidated approach to public information activities as a whole. Among the benefits of the integration, the Directors noted the greater efficiency of the operation that had not only resulted in better cooperation between UNDP and the Department in the field, but had also led to improved coordination of information activities among all members of the United Nations system represented in the host country.

9. In the area of sharing of equipment and common services, all respondents agreed that the integration had resulted in the more efficient use of limited resources. So far, savings have been generated through the use of joint pouch, telephone and facsimile services; cost sharing for the maintenance of premises, including security, in duty stations where the two offices share the premises; and joint use of vehicles. It was anticipated that additional savings could be generated in the future, after other areas of possible cost sharing have been identified.

10. Regarding the day-to-day operations of the United Nations information centres, most respondents emphasized the crucial role played by the National Information Officers or the Information Assistants, whose professional experience, in-depth knowledge of the local conditions and easy access to the media in the host country made them indispensable for the efficient functioning of the integrated centres. The respondents also pointed out that the integration had led to improved teamwork among staff members of both offices, particularly with regard to promotional activities for specific projects and joint action on local or national information campaigns to promote major issues before the United Nations.

IV. VIEWS OF HOST GOVERNMENTS

11. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/44 B, the Department of Public Information sought to obtain the views of the Governments concerned on the integration exercise. As noted in paragraph 4 above, two communications to this effect have been sent. As at 29 March 1994,

only four Governments have responded. One Government considered the role of the United Nations information centre too important for integration with the field office of UNDP, which had its own major assignments in that country, and expressed concern that the integration, even if functional autonomy of the centre was maintained, would adversely affect the activities of the United Nations information centre. In the light of the needs of the host country, the independent operation of the two offices needed to continue.

12. Another Government welcomed the integration exercise in its country and suggested that the consolidation of the operations of the United Nations information centre with all United Nations organizations and programmes represented in the country in common premises could evolve into a regional office also covering the United Nations activities for neighbouring countries.

13. Yet another Government noted that the integration exercise seemed to indicate the intention to formalize the situation in the countries where, for various reasons, staff members of the Department of Public Information were no longer being appointed as directors of the information centres. That Government believed that this situation could be temporarily accepted, until more viable possibilities for integration have been identified, in accordance with host country agreements between the United Nations and the Governments concerned.

14. Another Government emphasized the need to increase the staff resources allocated to the information centre located in its country and expressed concern about the decreasing level of operational funding for its activities. It commended the work performed by the information centre, but noted that it could become even more effective if it received a higher level of financial support.

V. CONCLUSIONS

15. The results of the current trial of integrating a number of United Nations information centres with field offices of UNDP have to be seen in the light of both the 1990 Agreement between UNDP and the Department of Public Information on cooperation in the field and the decision of the Secretary-General of March 1992 on the integration exercise. While the focus of the integration at this stage is on information centres where the Resident Representative of UNDP serves concurrently as full-time director of the United Nations information centre, the different mandates of the United Nations information centres and the field offices of UNDP have been respected and maintained in all cases.

16. The survey among Resident Representatives of UNDP serving concurrently as centre directors provides evidence of a further strengthening of cooperation between the Department and UNDP. In addition to an improved unified image of the United Nations in the field, progress has been made with regard to a more effective inter-agency cooperation in public information activities in the host countries concerned on all issues of interest to the United Nations, including those related to development.

17. The integrated information centres continue to report and are accountable to the Department of Public Information in the exercise of their functions.

18. The results of the evaluation show that one area requiring further efforts is that of adequate and regular briefings for Resident Representatives of UNDP serving concurrently as full-time centre directors. While the situation varies with specific regions, it is imperative that those Resident Representatives receive briefings both upon appointment and on a regular and continuous basis thereafter. In addition, efforts are being made to develop the existing briefing mechanism into a continuing two-way dialogue on the implementation of information programmes mandated by the General Assembly and requiring special attention. The Administrator of UNDP and the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information are in regular consultation on the integration process of United Nations information centres with field offices of UNDP and have jointly written to UNDP Resident Representatives serving as directors of United Nations information centres to ensure effective and thorough briefings on public information matters.

19. Another aspect of those briefings should be to make newly appointed Resident Representatives aware that, with regard to United Nations information centres, integration must respect the prevailing rules and regulations of the United Nations Secretariat pertaining to budgetary, personnel and other administrative matters and that United Nations information centres have to adhere to the specific United Nations rules and regulations on matters coming under the responsibility of the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance.

20. Based on the present evaluation, and taking into consideration the views of the Committee on Information, the Secretary-General intends to continue the integration experience, whenever feasible, in accordance with his stated objectives: to present a unified image of the United Nations in the field; to enhance information activities in all areas, including development issues; and to achieve possible economies through sharing of common services.

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SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

United Nations information centres in 1993: allocation of resources from the regular budget of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General regarding the allocation of resources to the United Nations information centres in 1992, "and would appreciate information on the status of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, as well as a detailed breakdown of resource deployment between centres"; while welcoming the action by some Governments with regard to the financial and material support for United Nations information centres in their respective capitals, the Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to study ways and means to rationalize and effect equitable disbursement of available resources to all United Nations information centres and report thereon to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth substantive session.

2. In paragraph 1 (k) of its resolution 46/73 B of 11 December 1991, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at all sessions of the Committee on the budget of each of the United Nations information centres, including detailed information on the level of assistance being provided by the host countries.

3. The present report is submitted to the Committee on Information in response to the above-mentioned requests. It includes the Department's comments on:

(a) Ongoing efforts to strengthen the information centres within available resources;

(b) Funding provided to each centre for its local operational expenses, excluding staffing costs, from the regular budget of the United Nations in 1993;

(c) Extent of host Government contributions received for 1993;

(d) Some suggestions on how to effect equitable disbursement of available resources to all United Nations information centres.

4. The report highlights, in particular, the cooperation and support needed from every host Government to enable the Secretary-General to "rationalize and effect equitable disbursement of available resources to all United Nations information centres" (General Assembly resolution 48/44 B, para. 11).

5. The present report deals exclusively with the 58 United Nations information centres that were operational during 1993. Three other centres were either not operational (Kabul) or not reactivated (Monrovia, San Salvador) as a result of local circumstances. In the case of San Salvador, the information component of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) has been undertaking public information activities on behalf of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

6. The report does not deal with the United Nations information services at Geneva and Vienna, which have their own budgets and staffing posts within the resources allocated to the Department. Nor does it deal with the information services of the four regional commissions, which operate within the administrative and budgetary mandates of each commission.

II. FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRES

7. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 48/44 B, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance attached by Member States to the role of United Nations information centres in effectively and comprehensively disseminating information about United Nations activities. The information centres also continue to be one of the most important means for creating greater public understanding of, and support for, the Organization.

8. The activities being undertaken by the United Nations information centres are in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Committee on Information and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/162 A of 8 December 1987. By that resolution, the Assembly recognized "the unique function of the United Nations information centres as one of the most important means of disseminating information about the United Nations among the peoples of the world ... . In this regard, United Nations information centres should continue to assist press and information media in their respective countries in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly and should intensify direct and systematic communication exchange with local information and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations in a mutually beneficial way. Every effort should be made to establish close coordination with other field offices of the United Nations system, particularly those of the United Nations Development Programme, in order to avoid duplication of work. Coordination with other United Nations offices should take into account the functional autonomy of the United Nations information centres. The Department should ensure open and unhindered access by all people to all United Nations information centres and to all materials distributed through the centres".

9. Given their increasing role, United Nations information centres actively mobilize the support of local media, Government agencies, parliamentarians, academic institutions, United Nations associations, non-governmental organizations and other special interest groups in promoting the United Nations and the priority issues before it. Their public information and outreach services are tailored to local target audiences. Newsletters and press releases are prepared, and the publications of the Department of Public Information adapted and published in national languages, as required.

10. An important aspect of the responsibilities of the United Nations information centres is to maintain a continuous dialogue with Headquarters, especially when it becomes necessary to "set the record straight" in response to erroneous media reports and articles, and to take the lead in providing media with accurate information on subjects of interest to them.

11. Additional functions performed by United Nations information centres include an increasing level of involvement in facilitating logistical and providing public information support for the growing peacemaking and peace-keeping activities of the United Nations.

III. STRENGTHENING OF UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRES

12. The Department of Public Information continues to make every effort to strengthen the effectiveness of the information centres within available budgetary resources. Special attention has been paid to a number of areas, including the upgrading of the locally-recruited Information Assistants to the level of National Information Officer; the provision of necessary electronic data transmission and retrieval equipment that would facilitate timely access to information materials prepared by the Department and provided by Headquarters; staff training; and other measures to streamline the work of the centres and enhance their effectiveness.

13. The Department is fully cognizant of the fact that the services of highly qualified and experienced local information specialists would enable the information centres better to meet the increased and new demands placed upon them by the host countries, their media and the public at large, and as a result of the special priorities established by the Secretary-General.

14. A recent positive development in that regard was the recognition by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session that the local-level information-related functions at the United Nations information centres meet the guidelines set by the International Civil Service Commission for the National Professional Officer category. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly approved the upgrading of 40 local-level posts in the United Nations information centres to the National Information Officer category in the course of the biennium 1994-1995.

15. Currently, there are National Information Officers at 21 United Nations information centres. The upgrading and/or appointment of National Information Officers at 19 additional information centres will therefore be undertaken during the biennium 1994-1995 on the basis of the results of the ongoing

classification review exercise at field duty stations carried out by the Office of Human Resources Management, and the priorities established by the Department.

16. The Secretary-General may consider requesting further conversions of local-level posts to the National Information Officer category as appropriate in the context of his programme budget proposals for the biennium 1996-1997 and future biennia.

17. During 1993, all 58 information centres that are at present operational were computerized. Action is being taken to provide additional equipment and software, or to upgrade the existing equipment where necessary, in order to enable the information centres to have ready and timely access to Headquarters electronic transmission and information retrieval systems. Full access, however, is dependent on the availability of local telecommunications services. At present, more than half of the information centres have effective electronic mail connections with Headquarters. Others will be linked as soon as local conditions permit. Efforts continue to enhance the ability of all information centres to respond promptly to the developing situations and to improve their programme delivery.

18. The Department has also arranged to provide local training for the staff of information centres in computer applications such as DOS, WordPerfect, Lotus and dBase.

19. As recommended by the Committee on Information, increasing emphasis is being given to working closely with other organizations of the United Nations system represented in the host country. Besides avoiding duplication of work, such cooperation enables the Organization to present a unified image and to speak with one voice in accordance with the priorities established by the Secretary-General. In addition, the cost-sharing of services among United Nations offices could result in some reduction in expenditure which could allow some redistribution of available resources to other information centres.

IV. DISBURSEMENT OF RESOURCES FROM THE REGULAR BUDGET IN 1993

20. The operational funds which have been made available to the Department of Public Information for disbursement for the United Nations information centres are intended primarily for their maintenance and upkeep, including rental and maintenance of premises, utilities, communications, maintenance of equipment, local transportation, stationery and office supplies, library supplies, office and electronic equipment, freight and handling charges for shipment of equipment and supplies, etc. Some funds are provided for local translations and printing of information materials, and for travel within the area serviced by the information centre. To the maximum extent possible, the allocation of the non-staff operating funds is established on a pragmatic basis, taking into account the requirements of each information centre, the availability of funds and the existing circumstances in each host country. The higher disbursement in United States dollar terms to certain centres, therefore, is primarily attributable to their high-cost locations, especially where the host Government does not provide rent-free office premises. A breakdown of regular budget

resources allocated to individual centres during 1993, excluding staff salaries and costs, is provided in the annex to the present report.

21. Particular attention should be given to the fact that operational funds for every information centre, even those for which host Government financial support is anticipated, have to be provided at the beginning of each year from the Department's regular budget allocation. In due course, some expenditures can be offset, as appropriate, when a host Government's annual contribution is received and credited at United Nations Headquarters. However, it should be noted that there is no fixed schedule for the submission of contributions by host Governments. Furthermore, the level of some host Government contributions fluctuates and cannot be projected or anticipated with accuracy.

22. Limited regular budget resources make it even more important to encourage and promote the active involvement and support of Governments, United Nations associations, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and other interest groups. The Department of Public Information has to seek and rely on host Government support to supplement available resources from the regular United Nations budget which are disbursed to all information centres.

V. HOST GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE INFORMATION CENTRES

23. During the early years of the Organization, United Nations information centres were financed completely out of the regular budget of the United Nations, supplemented in some cases by voluntary host Government support - either rent-free office premises or some financial support, or both. Information centres were opened on the basis of informal understandings with host Governments and without formal agreements.

24. In its resolution 1405 (XIV) of 1 December 1959, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to enlist the cooperation of the Member States concerned in providing all possible facilities for the establishment of such new centres and in assisting actively in efforts to promote wider public understanding of the aims and activities of the United Nations. Following the adoption of that resolution, the Department of Public Information began to request Member States that wished to establish United Nations information centres or information components in their countries to indicate the extent of their support in written agreements signed between the United Nations and the host Government concerned.

25. Over the years, the ad hoc support received from host Governments has varied. Many continue to provide invaluable assistance for the information centres in cash or in kind. At the same time, the level of funds provided by some other Governments has either remained the same or even decreased, while a number of others have ceased providing financial support altogether. Many Governments have so far failed to offer any support at all.

26. For 1993, 19 host Governments provided rent-free office premises, 7 provided both rent-free premises and financial support, and 2 provided rent-free premises and the services of local staff at no cost to the United Nations. Ten Governments provided a financial contribution only.

Unfortunately, funds received from some Governments were below the anticipated level or inadequate for the agreed purposes, especially for payment of salaries and related costs of the staff in posts funded from extrabudgetary sources. Twenty Governments did not provide any support. The annex contains the breakdown of host Government support for 1993 for the 58 United Nations information centres that are currently operational.

27. As the Department is being called upon to absorb an increasing amount of extrabudgetary funding, the overall situation needs to be addressed.

VI. REDRESSING DIFFERENCES IN ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

28. As indicated in paragraph 20 above, the Department of Public Information is making every effort to allocate available resources to all information centres on a pragmatic basis and taking into account the existing circumstances in each host country. Understandably, centres in high-cost locations receive higher financial allocations, especially if host Governments do not provide rent-free office premises or financial contributions to offset the costs.

29. In this regard, the Department is vigorously pursuing a number of options to help lower existing expenditures in some high-cost countries. A positive development in this context was the termination of the unfavourable long-term lease agreement for the premises of the United Nations information centre in London. The Department negotiated the surrender of the lease agreement to a third party, which has given the centre until the end of June 1994 to vacate the premises. It is anticipated that more suitable office premises at current open market rates would result in savings of some 50 per cent or more per year over the current expenditure.

30. Experience has shown that when expected financial support from host Governments for local operating costs and extra-budgetary staff costs are either inadequate or not received, the relevant information centres are not able fully to provide the services expected of them. In addition, the work of other centres is adversely affected, as the available funds from the regular budget have to be redeployed to cover the funds that are outstanding.

31. A principal means of redressing differences in the allocation of resources to all United Nations information centres is effective and meaningful support from every host Government on an assured, realistic and continuing basis. First, Governments that have discontinued payments need to resume their obligations. Secondly, Governments that have decreased their level of support should take into account actual requirements. Most certainly, it would be very helpful if Governments that do not provide any support would begin to do so.

32. Equally important, the provision of additional staffing and financial resources by the General Assembly should be a prerequisite for the establishment of new United Nations information centres and information components, as well as for the enhancement of the existing centres.

33. The Department, therefore, invites the attention of the Committee on Information to cases where there is no host Government support or where extrabudgetary commitments are not being met. Clearly, insufficient funds to maintain operations funded from committed extrabudgetary sources have a negative, and sometimes crippling, effect on the operations of other centres. Furthermore, as funds then have to be redirected from other centres to meet the ongoing needs, the network of United Nations information centres as a whole is ultimately affected.

Annex

ALLOCATION OF UNITED NATIONS REGULAR BUDGET FUNDS AND HOST GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

31 December 1993

Centre	Established	United Nations Regular Budget		Host Government Support			
		Posts	Operational funds (excl. staff costs) (US$)	Signed agreement	Rent-free premises	Extra-budgetary commitments for staff funding (US$)	Cash contribution actually received for 1993 (US$)
Accra	March 58	P4; 5 local staff	24,600		yes		
Algiers	Sept. 63	4 local staff	17,000		yes		
Ankara	March 75	2 local staff	25,400	January 75	no		
Antananarivo	January 63	2 local staff	17,800		no		
Asuncion	October 82	2 local staff	12,400		no		
Athens	April 54	5 local staff	108,400	October 82	no		98,418.97
Beirut	Sept. 82	5 local staff	31,900		no		
Santa Fe de Bogota	May 54	P4; 5 local staff	121,700	1955	no		70,000.00
Brazzaville	June 63	5 local staff	52,100	June 63	yes		
Brussels	January 75	5 local staff	212,700	January 76	no		62,857.14
Bucharest	June 70	1 local staff	10,100	April 70	yes	5 local (42,371.21)	2,480.66
Buenos Aires	Nov. 48	5 local staff	128,200		yes		69,998.99
Bujumbura	June 61	4 local staff	29,100		yes		
Cairo	April 49	5 local staff	71,400		no		238.67
Colombo	August 61	4 local staff	19,200		yes		
Copenhagen	Dec. 46	6 local staff	125,000	January 89	no		41,332.65

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Centre	Established	United Nations Regular Budget		Host Government Support			
		Posts	Operational funds (excl. staff costs) (US$)	Signed agreement	Rent-free premises	Extra-budgetary commitments for staff funding (US$)	Cash contribution actually received for 1993 (US$)
Dakar	April 64	P5; 4 local staff	60,500		yes		
Dar-es-Salaam	June 61	4 local staff	34,500	1961	yes		
Dhaka	August 81	4 local staff	53,800	August 81	no		2,531.65
Harare	Nov. 1982	5 local staff	14,000		yes		
Islamabad	March 51	P4; 7 local staff	41,500		no		5,752.51
Jakarta	August 85 (re-opened)	P5; 4 local staff	46,700		yes	Services of Watchman	
Kabul a/	October 58	2 local staff	300				
Kathmandu	April 64	3 local staff	16,700		no		
Khartoum	October 63	P4; 4 local staff	48,100	May 63	yes		
Kinshasa	July 64	5 local staff	22,500		no		
Lagos	May 67	P5; 5 local staff	37,200	Nov. 64	yes	2 local (4,749.34)	2,783.73
La Paz	Sept. 63	3 local staff	20,100		no		2,949.00
Lima b/	April 60	6 local staff	51,700		no		
Lisbon	Nov. 77	P4; 3 local staff	75,800	Sept.78	yes	2 local (63,844.26)	95,000.00
Lome	May 62	4 local staff	12,800		yes		
London c/	January 47	D1; 7 local staff	547,700		no		

Centre	Established	United Nations Regular Budget		Host Government Support			
		Posts	Operational funds (excl. staff costs) (US$)	Signed agreement	Rent-free premises	Extra-budgetary commitments for staff funding (US$)	Cash contribution actually received for 1993 (US$)
Lusaka	October 76	5 local staff	29,800		yes		
Madrid	May 88	P5; 4 local staff	75,200		yes		69,000.00
Managua	July 84		23,400	April 84	yes	3 local (39,337.63)	
Manama	Nov. 77		27,900	Dec.74 & Jan.77	yes	3 local (79,618.90)	33,000 from Bahrain
Manila	August 53	4 local staff	61,800	1977	yes		
Maseru	Feb. 79	3 local staff	7,400		yes		
Mexico City	August 47	8 local staff	173,400		no		
Monrovia a/	October 50		-				
Moscow	April 48	D1; 6 local staff	72,500		no		
Nairobi	August 74	4 local staff	18,800	Nov. 74	no		
New Delhi	January 47	D1; 7 local staff	87,100		no		
Ouagadougou	April 82	5 local staff	61,300	June 82	yes		
Panama City	Sept. 84	2 local staff	45,800	October 82	yes	Services of 3 local	
Paris	March 47	D1, P3; 6 local staff	78,800		no		5,454.54
Port of Spain	January 62	P4; 5 local staff	60,800	1981	no		2,735.32 includes 2,131.44 from Govt. of Barbados

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Centre	Established	United Nations Regular Budget		Host Government Support			
		Posts	Operational funds (excl. staff costs) (US$)	Signed agreement	Rent-free premises	Extra-budgetary commitments for staff funding (US$)	Cash contribution actually received for 1993 (US$)
Prague	Dec. 47	P4; 4 local staff	31,300		no		
Rabat	Dec. 62	5 local staff	66,000		no		
Rio de Janeiro	March 47	P5; 6 local staff	79,900	1961 & 1963	yes		
Rome	July 58	D1; 5 local staff	87,100		yes		
San Salvador 2/	July 60		2,100				
Sydney	Nov. 48	5 local staff	104,800		no		
Tehran 1/	May 50	2 local staff	30,400		no		
Tokyo 2/	April 58	D1; 7 local staff	453,500		no		
Tripoli	January 60		67,800	May 77	yes	P - 5 (111,814.61) 3 local (128,891.64)	396,663.03
Tunis	May 60	P5; 4 local staff	50,200		yes		
Washington	October 46	D1, P4; 6 local staff	212,000		no		
Windhoek	October 92	P5; 4 local staff	63,000		no		
Yangon	June 59	4 local staff	18,700		no		

Centre	Established	United Nations Regular Budget		Host Government Support			
		Posts	Operational funds (excl. staff costs) (US$)	Signed agreement	Rent-free premises	Extra-budgetary commitments for staff funding (US$)	Cash contribution actually received for 1993 (US$)
Yaounde	October 86	P4; 6 local staff	77,800		yes	2 local (17,808.04)	

a/ Not operational in the country.

b/ The Director of the Regional Disarmament Centre serves as Director of the information centre.

c/ Currently under review.

d/ Not operational.

e/ At the present time, public information activities are undertaken in cooperation with ONUSAL.

f/ Full reactivation with full-time Director and host Government support under discussion.

g/ The Government of Japan provides an annual contribution equivalent to US$ 100,000 for the Trust Fund for Expansion of Public Information Activities in Japan.

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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
Sixteenth session
9-24 May 1994

SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Enhancing, reactivation and establishment of United Nations information centres

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 13 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993, the General Assembly again called upon the Secretary-General to implement fully and expeditiously the recommendation contained in paragraph 10 of its resolution 47/73 B of 14 December 1992 regarding the establishment of a United Nations information centre at Sana'a; the reactivation of the United Nations information centre at Tehran; and the enhancement of the information centres at Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam and Dhaka; and to submit the implementation report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth substantive session.

2. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 47/73 B of 14 December 1992, the General Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to implement fully its recommendations contained in resolution 46/73 B of 11 December 1991, including paragraphs 1 (l) and (m).

3. In paragraphs 1 (l) and (m) of its resolution 46/73 B, the General Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations of the Committee on Information that the Department of Public Information provide the necessary professionals and equipment where necessary to enhance the information centres at Tehran, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka and Bujumbura; that the Assembly consider approval of the establishment of a new United Nations information centre at Sana'a.

4. The present report outlines the action taken by the Department of Public Information to implement those recommendations.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRE AT SANA'A

5. The Department of Public Information has already appointed a Professional-level Information Officer to head the United Nations information centre which is expected to be established at Sana'a by the end of April. Other appropriate measures to make the centre operational within the limits of existing budgetary resources will be taken after the head of the information centre has assumed functions.

6. In addition, the Department is continuing its consultations with the Government of Yemen regarding the availability of the rent-free office premises earmarked for the United Nations information centre at Sana'a.

III. REACTIVATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRE AT TEHRAN

7. The United Nations information centre at Tehran continues to be operational with the services of two locally recruited staff members: an Information Assistant and a Reference Assistant. The centre shares common premises with the field office of the United Nations Development Programme. Its operations have been computerized and the staff have received the necessary training.

8. The Department has initiated action to appoint a Professional-level Information Officer to head the United Nations information centre at Tehran. That internationally recruited staff member is expected to assume functions at the beginning of April 1994. Other appropriate measures will be taken after the head of the information centre has assumed functions. Meanwhile, consultations with the relevant authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran continue.

IV. ENHANCEMENT OF UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRES AT BUJUMBURA, DAR ES SALAAM AND DHAKA

9. The information centres at Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam and Dhaka continue to carry out their functions in an effective manner in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 (l) of General Assembly resolution 46/73 B, in which it was recommended that the Department of Public Information provide the necessary professionals and equipment to enhance those three information centres.

10. The Department has provided computers and other necessary equipment. All available local-level posts have been filled. In the information centre at Dhaka, the Department undertook to reallocate the functions of the existing posts so that the centre now has an Information Assistant and a Reference Assistant.

11. In addition, following the decision of the General Assembly to establish posts at the National Officer level, it is anticipated that in the course of 1994, the posts of Information Assistants at the centres at Bujumbura and Dhaka and their incumbents will be upgraded to the level of National Information

Officer. It should be noted that the United Nations information centre at Dar es Salaam already has a National Information Officer. In addition, appropriate staff at all three information centres have been trained in computer applications.

V. CONCLUSION

12. The Department of Public Information has taken all practical action to implement as fully as possible the provisions of General Assembly resolutions regarding the United Nations information centres at Sana'a, Tehran, Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam and Dhaka.

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SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Observations and suggestions by Member States on ways and means of furthering the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 20 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993, the General Assembly invited Member States that wished to do so to submit their observations and suggestions to the Secretary-General by 1 January 1994 on ways and means of furthering the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with a view to consolidating recent experience in the field of international cooperation aimed at enabling them to develop their own information and communication capacities freely and independently, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session.

2. Pursuant to that request, by a note dated 15 December 1993, the Secretary-General invited the Governments of Member States to submit the replies referred to in paragraph 20 of resolution 48/44 B. The Secretary-General had already issued communications on this matter under the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 46/73 B of 11 December 1991 and 47/73 B of 14 December 1992, as well as notes dated 29 May 1992 and 19 February 1993.

3. In view of the fact that, as at 15 March 1994, no communications from Member States on this matter have been received, the Committee on Information may wish to extend the deadline for submission of replies by Member States to 31 August 1994 and to consider the requested report on available responses at its seventeenth substantive session, to be held in 1995.

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